



# TENNESSEE

## HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton County Department of Education  
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Website: [www.hcde.org](http://www.hcde.org)

### Program Overview

In 2000, the Tennessee Institute of Public Policy released a publication listing the top 20 failing schools in Tennessee. Among those failing schools were nine elementary schools located in Hamilton County. In response to this publication, the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) designed an incentive program to reward high-performing teachers who teach in failing schools. Funding for the incentive program came from HCDE, the Benwood Foundation, and the Public Education Fund (PEF). HCDE offers teachers housing incentives, team bonuses and recruitment and retention bonuses. Principals have the opportunity to receive salary bonuses from HCDE.

Teachers who increase student growth at the classroom level by 15 percent or more receive a \$5,000 bonus. Principals whose schools increase student test scores by more than 15 percent are eligible for a \$10,000 bonus. Hamilton County also awards any teacher in any school, including coaches and nontested teachers, a \$1,000 bonus if the overall school's student growth surpasses 15 percent. Student and schoolwide growth is based on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System. In addition, the mayor of Chattanooga offers all teachers in Hamilton County low-interest mortgages for housing.

At the end of the 2007-08 school-year, two Benwood elementary schools moved into 'good standing.' This improvement comes after eight years of failing to make the state's Adequate Yearly Progress.

### Program Information

- [Hamilton County Schools: Achievement and Reform](#)
- [Hamilton County 2007 Report Card](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System Data](#)

### Select Articles and Reports

- *Chattanooga Times Free Press* (July 29, 2008). [Two Local Schools Move to 'Good Standing.'](#)



- Letter to the Editor, *Chattanooga Times Free Press* (May 28, 2008). [Benwood Story Proves Potential.](#)
- *Chattanooga Times Free Press* (April 23, 2008). [Benwood Initiative Expands, Improves.](#)
- Education Sector (April 7, 2008). [The Benwood Plan: A Lesson in Comprehensive Teacher Reform.](#)